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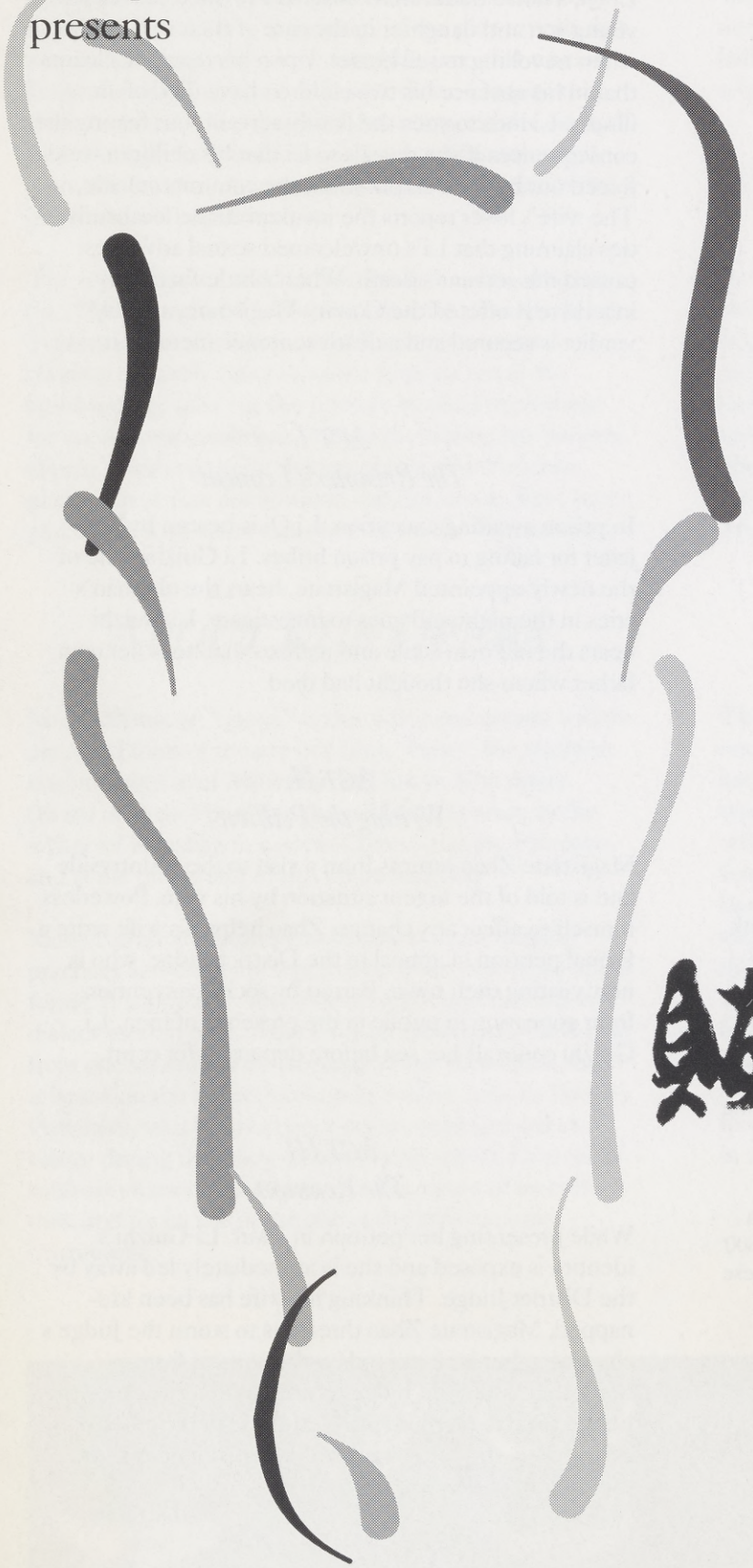

販馬記

Fan Ma Ji

"Tale of the Horse Trader"

A Hua Kun Opera Production

April 30, 1993 • 8:00 pm
Zellerbach Playhouse

Fan Ma Ji

CAST

(in order of appearance)

Jailer	Fan Zhang
Li Qi, a horse trader	Qin Ruisheng
Handmaid	Tsao Jerlian
Li Guizhi, wife of the Magistrate of Baocheng County	Hua Wenyi
Houseman	Zhu Heying
Zhao Chong, Magistrate of Baocheng County	Wang Taiqi
Li Baotong, District Judge	Huang Meiyun
Magistrate Hu, former Magistrate of Baocheng County	Zhu Huozhang
Gatekeeper	Zhu Heying
Court Runners and Attendants of the Judge	Bert Crews Chris Hamm Dennis Ludwick Corey Schaffer

MUSICIANS

Melodic Orchestra	
dizi, horizontal bamboo flute	Zou Youjun
erhu, bowed fiddle	You Shanyao
pipa, lute	Min Xiaofen
yangqin, struck dulcimer	Zhao Yangqin
suona, double reed aerophone	Dong Xiayu
Percussion Orchestra	
guban, drum and wooden clappers	Gao Mingliang
xiaoluo, small gong	Tian Wenhan
naobo, small cymbals	Zhao Xiaoxuan
daluo, large gong	Ng Yin-Ming
Costumes	Mu Lianzhong
Makeup	Shen Fuyun
Play Translation	Dr. Lindy Li Mark
Production Assistant	Andrea Goldman

This production of *Fan Ma Ji* and the residency activities of the Hua Kun Opera at the University of California at Berkeley have been funded, in part, by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Additional funding has been provided by the Department of Dramatic Art and Mrs. Phyllis Chen.

Catering for the invitation-only post-performance reception has been graciously donated by the Jade Villa Restaurant, 800 Broadway, Oakland, and the Cal Alumni Association, Chinese Chapter.

Special Thanks to: Dr. Richard H. Lee, President, CAA Chinese Chapter; Genevieve Ong, Immediate Past President, CAA Chinese Chapter; Peter Sellars, Los Angeles Festival; Paul Mao; Terry Liu, NEA; James Y. Chin; Aislinn Scofield, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; Mary Jane Perna, Bancroft Library; Center for Chinese Studies; Professors James Cahill, Jeffrey Riegel, and Stephen West; Li Weihong; Li Xinchuan; Sanjeev Jain; Tom Hutchinson and Mike Francisco, Office of Media Services, UCB.

THE PLAY

Li Qi, a horse trader from Shaanxi Province, leaves his young son and daughter in the care of their stepmother when travelling to sell horses. Upon his return, Li learns that in his absence his two children have died of an illness. Li interrogates the family servant, but fearing the consequences if she reveals to Li that his children were forced out by their stepmother, she commits suicide. The wife's lover reports the incident to the local authorities claiming that Li's unwelcomed sexual advances caused the servant's death. When a little financial incentive is offered the County Magistrate, a guilty verdict is secured and a death sentence meted out.

ACT I
The Prisoner's Lament

In prison awaiting execution, Li Qi is beaten by the jailer for failing to pay prison bribes. Li Guizhi, wife of the newly-appointed Magistrate, hears the old man's cries in the night and goes to investigate. Li Guizhi hears the old man's tale and realizes that he is her own father whom she thought had died.

ACT II
Writing the Petition

Magistrate Zhao returns from a visit to the countryside and is told of the urgent situation by his wife. Powerless himself to affect any change, Zhao helps his wife write a formal petition of appeal to the District Judge, who is now visiting their town. Barred by social convention from appearing in public in the presence of men, Li Guizhi conceals her sex before departing for court.

ACT III
The Reunion

While presenting her petition in court, Li Guizhi's identity is exposed and she is immediately led away by the District Judge. Thinking his wife has been kidnapped, Magistrate Zhao threatens to storm the Judge's chambers, but is restrained by the corrupt former Magistrate Hu. The Judge returns and interrogates Zhao before also leading him off. Returning to the courtroom a final time, the Judge sends for the prisoner and gets to the bottom of the case.

ABOUT FAN MA JI

Like many Chinese operas, *Fan Ma Ji* (lit. "Tale of the Horse Trader") is a play whose authorship is unknown. An early 19th century manuscript of the play reveals that it once contained thirty-two acts, but since that time its length has been reduced to a mere three. Despite this change, the play's original title has remained the same. Now through recapitulation rather than through enactment, we learn of the events which occured prior to the horse trader's imprisonment.

The style of music used in *Fan Ma Ji* is called *chuiqiang* (lit., "blown melody"). Developed during the late Ming dynasty under the influence of Kun opera music, *chuqiang* probably takes its name from its use of the bamboo flute (*dizi*) as the primary musical instrument for vocal accompaniment. Although *chuqiang* has become closely associated with Hui opera of Anhui Province, plays such as *Fan Ma Ji* which use this music, have been part of the Kun opera repertoire since the 19th century.

ABOUT KUN OPERA

Music drama, or "opera," is the oldest and mostly widely practiced form of theatre in China. Today, the tradition encompasses over 360 individual forms. Kun opera (*kunqu* or *kunju*) began in the mid-16th century in the village of Kunshan in eastern China's Jiangsu Province, and is the progenitor of this opera tradition.

Many common features can be found in the staging practices and dramatic repertoires of the numerous opera forms. It is primarily the style of music and the regional dialect used in performance which distinguish the forms from one another. The language of the Kun opera stage is based on the dialect spoken in Suzhou (also in Jiangsu Province), which was a major commercial and artistic center during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Kun opera music is characterized by the gentle nature of its melodies, and for its use of the *dizi* as the lead melodic instrument.

The plays of the Kun opera repertoire are recognized in the literary world for their elegant language and poetic imagery. Since its inception, Kun opera has been closely associated with China's intelligentsia and elite classes. The refined nature of its dramatic and musical components made the form perfectly suited for the banquet halls of China's emperors and private salons of its wealthy scholar-officials.

THE ACTOR AND THE STAGE

As in Italian opera, the primary medium of artistic expression in Chinese opera is song. Unlike its Western counterpart, however, Chinese opera performers also use a stylized movement vocabulary in performance. Chinese opera has traditionally been performed on a bare stage, save for a carpet, a table, and a chair or two. Void of physically contextualizing scenery, Chinese opera actors must depend solely on their vocal, physical, and interpretive skills to create and sustain the theatrical performance.

ROLE CATEGORIES

The dramatic characters found in Chinese operas fall into one of a number of role categories. The exact numbers and names of the categories vary from form to form, but typically include: old male, young male, martial male, refined young female, vivacious young female, martial female, old female, clown, and painted-face types. The factors which differentiate these categories from one another include the age, gender, and level of integrity of the characters, and the amount of physical combat and acrobatic skills which they perform. Each role category has prescribed vocal and movement techniques, as well as unique costume and makeup styles. Prior to ever taking the stage, Chinese opera performers undergo years of intensive physical training. An actor generally specializes in a single role category throughout his stage career.

Painted-face makeup styles

HUA KUN OPERA

Program and Production Staff

Hua Wenyi
Jimmie Su
Susan Pertel Jain
Qin Ruisheng
Joseph A. Pertel

Fan Ma Ji *Project Consultant:*
Dr. Elizabeth Wichmann,
University of Hawaii, Dept. of Theatre and Dance

Supertitle Projectionist — Dr. Lindy Li Mark
Stage Assistant — Elona Tsou

DEPARTMENT OF DRAMATIC ART

Chair — Lorne M. Buchman

Head of Production — Barbara Codd
Director of Marketing — Stephanie Zimmerman
Technical Director — Stan Kramer
Production Supervisor — Mark Nakahara
Master Carpenter — Rick Bautista
Scenic Artist — Regina Gilligan
Property Manager — Jean Fichtenkort
Production Coordinator — Gary John Graves
Costumer — Roberta Vance
Costume Curator — Janet Nakamura
Shop Assistants — Grace Chen, Tia Marie, Ben Cosgrove, Matt Norfleet, Ken Exner, Kegan Stedwell, Mike Froelich, Latif VanLowe, Tom Goodrich

Program design: David Beckerman/The Individual Works
Calligraphy: Xu Yamin

We are pleased to announce two events at the Asian Art Museum held in conjunction with our presentation of *FAN MA JI* and Asian Pacific Heritage Month.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 1993
Trustees Auditorium
Asian Art Museum, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

10:15 am
Professor Lindy Li Mark
Lecture: Chinese Theatre and Society Past and Present

7:00 pm
Kun Opera—Lecture and Performance
Madam Hua Wenyi (Hua Kun Opera) and
Susan Pertel Jain

Admission is free, limit two tickets per event. For tickets and further information, please call 415.668.6404.

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CHOREOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
directed by Carol Egan
Friday, May 7 at 4:30 & 8:00 pm • Free

A HISTORY OF HOMOSEXUALITY IN SIX SCENES
written and directed by John Fisher
May 13, 14 at 8:00 pm • May 15 at 2:00 & 8:00 pm • Free

Room 7, Zellerbach Hall

SLACKS AND TOPS by Harry Kondoleon, and
THE BOOR by Anton Chekhov
May 3, 4 at 8:00 pm • Free

THE LOVER by Harold Pinter, and
ROCKABY by Samuel Beckett
May 7, 8 at 8:00 pm • Free

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by Sue Townsend
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